

AYN RAND

The Age of Envy



About the Author

Ayn Rand created and defined her philosophy, Objectivism, in the pages of her best-selling novels, particularly *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*, and in a series of nonfiction books that address a wide range of fundamental issues in philosophy. Born Alisa Rosenbaum in Tsarist St. Petersburg in 1905, Rand witnessed the Russian Revolution as a teenager and promptly condemned communism as immoral for sacrificing the individual to the collective. In 1926, shortly after graduating from the University of Leningrad, she fled to America, adopting the pen name Ayn Rand to shield her family from possible persecution once her anti-communism became well known. In Hollywood, she wrote scenarios for famous director Cecil B. DeMille and met her future husband on a movie set, but the couple struggled financially for years. Then came a string of writing successes: a Broadway play, followed by her first novel, *We the Living* (1936), then a novella called *Anthem* (1938), and later her first best seller, the story of a fiercely independent architect named Howard Roark in *The Fountainhead* (1943). All these works of fiction feature gripping stories and exalted, egoistic, this-worldly heroes. In writing *Atlas Shrugged* (1957) — the story of a man who said he would stop the motor of the world, and did — Rand had to define fully her new philosophy of reason, rational self-interest, and laissez-faire capitalism. Thereafter, and until her death in 1982, Rand amplified and explicated her “philosophy for living on earth” in a stream of books whose theoretical essays and cultural commentaries cover important topics across the five major branches of philosophy: metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, politics and esthetics.

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A culture, like an individual, has a sense of life or, rather, the equivalent of a sense of life — an emotional atmosphere created by its dominant philosophy, by its view of man and of existence. This emotional atmosphere represents a culture's dominant values and serves as the leitmotif of a given age, setting its trends and its style.

Thus Western civilization had an Age of Reason and an Age of Enlightenment. In those periods, the quest for reason and enlightenment was the dominant intellectual drive and created a corresponding emotional atmosphere that fostered these values.

Today, we live in the Age of Envy.

“Envy” is not the emotion I have in mind, but it is the clearest manifestation of an emotion that has remained nameless; it is the only element of a complex emotional sum that men have permitted themselves to identify.

Envy is regarded by most people as a petty, superficial emotion and, therefore, it serves as a semihuman cover for so inhuman an emotion that those who feel it seldom dare admit it even to themselves. Mankind has lived with it, has observed its manifestations and, to various extents, has been ravaged by it for countless centuries, yet has failed to grasp its meaning and to rebel against its exponents.

Today, that emotion is the leitmotif, the sense of life of our culture. It is all around us, we are drowning in it, it is almost explicitly confessed by its more brazen exponents — yet men continue to evade its existence and are peculiarly afraid to name it, as primitive people were once afraid to pronounce the name of the devil.

That emotion is: *hatred of the good for being the good.*

This hatred is not resentment against some prescribed view of the good with which one does not agree. For instance, if a child resents some conventional type of obedient boy who is constantly held up to him as an ideal to emulate, this is not hatred of the good: the child does *not* regard that boy as *good*, and his resentment is the product of a clash between his values and those of his elders (though he is too young to grasp the issue in such terms). Similarly, if an adult does not regard altruism as good and resents the adulation bestowed upon some “humanitarian,” this is a clash between his values and those of others, not hatred of the good.

Hatred of the good for being the good means hatred of that which one regards as good by one’s own (conscious or subconscious) judgment. It means hatred of a person for possessing a value or virtue one regards as desirable.

If a child wants to get good grades in school, but is unable or unwilling to achieve them and begins to hate the children who do, *that* is hatred of the good. If a man regards intelligence as a value, but is troubled by self-doubt and begins to hate the men *he* judges to be intelligent, *that* is hatred of the good.

The nature of the particular values a man chooses to hold is not the primary factor in this issue (although irrational values may contribute a great deal to the formation of that emotion). The primary factor and distinguishing characteristic is an emotional mechanism set in reverse: a response of hatred, not toward human vices, but toward human virtues.

To be exact, the emotional mechanism is not set in reverse, but is set one way: its exponents do not experience love for evil men; their emotional range is limited to hatred or indifference. It is impossible to experience love, which is a response to values, when one’s automatized response to values is hatred.

In any specific instance, this type of hatred is heavily enmeshed in rationalizations. The most common one is: "I don't hate him for his intelligence, but for his conceit!" More often than not, if one asks the speaker to name the evidence of the victim's conceit, he exhausts such generalities as: "He's insolent ... he's stubborn ... he's selfish," and ends up with some indeterminate accusation which amounts to: "He's intelligent and he knows it." Well, why shouldn't he know it? Blank out. Should he hide it? Blank out. From whom should he hide it? The implicit, but never stated, answer is: "From people like me."

Yet such haters accept and even seem to admire the spectacle of conceit put on for their benefit by a man who shows off, boasting about his own alleged virtues or achievements, blatantly confessing a lack of self-confidence. This, of course, is a clue to the nature of the hatred. The haters seem unable to differentiate conceptually between "conceit" and a deserved *pride*, yet they seem to know the difference "instinctively," i.e., by means of their automatized sense of life.

Since very few men have fully consistent characters, it is often hard to tell, in a specific instance, whether a given man is hated for his virtues or for his actual flaws. In regard to one's own feelings, only a rigorously conscientious habit of introspection can enable one to be certain of the nature and causes of one's emotional responses. But introspection is the mental process most fiercely avoided by the haters, which permits them a virtually unlimited choice of rationalizations. In regard to judging the emotional responses of others, it is extremely difficult to tell their reasons in a specific case, particularly if it involves complex personal relationships. It is, therefore, in the broad, impersonal field of responses to strangers, to casual acquaintances, to public figures or to events that have no direct bearing on the haters' own lives that one can observe the hatred of the good in a pure, unmistakable form.

Its clearest manifestation is the attitude of a person who characteristically resents someone's success, happiness, achievement or good fortune — and experiences pleasure at someone's failure, unhappiness or misfortune. This is pure, "nonvenal" hatred of the good for being the good: the hater has nothing to lose or gain in such instances, no practical value at stake, no existential motive, no knowledge except the fact that a human being has succeeded or failed. The expressions of this response are brief, casual, as a rule involuntary. But if you have seen it, you have seen the naked face of evil.

Do not confuse this response with that of a person who resents someone's unearned success, or feels pleased by someone's deserved failure. These responses are caused by a sense of justice, which is an entirely different phenomenon, and its emotional manifestations are different: in such cases, a person expresses indignation, not hatred — or relief, not malicious gloating.

Superficially, the motive of those who hate the good is taken to be envy. A dictionary definition of envy is: "1. a sense of discontent or jealousy with regard to another's advantages, success, possessions, etc. 2. desire for an advantage possessed by another." (*The Random House Dictionary*, 1968.) The same dictionary adds the following elucidation: "To *envy* is to feel resentful because someone else possesses or has achieved what one wishes oneself to possess or to have achieved."

This covers a great many emotional responses, which come from different motives. In a certain sense, the second definition is the opposite of the first, and the more innocent of the two.

For example, if a poor man experiences a moment's envy of another man's wealth, the feeling may mean nothing more than a momentary concretization of his desire for wealth; the feeling is not directed against that particular rich person and is concerned with the wealth,

not the person. The feeling, in effect, may amount to: “I wish I had an income (or a house, or a car, or an overcoat) like his.” The result of this feeling may be an added incentive for the man to improve his financial condition.

The feeling is less innocent, if it involves personal resentment and amounts to: “I want to put on a front, like this man.” The result is a second-hander who lives beyond his means, struggling to “keep up with the Joneses.”

The feeling is still less innocent, if it amounts to: “I want *this man’s* car (or overcoat, or diamond shirt studs, or industrial establishment).” The result is a criminal.

But these are still human beings, in various stages of immorality, compared to the inhuman object whose feeling is: “I *hate* this man because he is wealthy and I am not.”

Envy is part of this creature’s feeling, but only the superficial, semirespectable part; it is like the tip of an iceberg showing nothing worse than ice, but with the submerged part consisting of a compost of rotting living matter. The envy, in this case, is semirespectable because it seems to imply a desire for material possessions, which is a human being’s desire. But, deep down, the creature has no such desire: it does not want to be rich, it wants the human being to be poor.

This is particularly clear in the much more virulent cases of hatred, masked as envy, for those who possess personal values or virtues: hatred for a man (or a woman) because he (or she) is beautiful or intelligent or successful or honest or happy. In these cases, the creature has no desire and makes no effort to improve its appearance, to develop or to use its intelligence, to struggle for success, to practice honesty, to be happy (nothing can make it happy). It knows that the disfigurement or the mental collapse or the failure or the

immorality or the misery of its victim would not endow it with his or her value. *It does not desire the value: it desires the value destruction.*

“They do not want to own your fortune, they want you to lose it; they do not want to succeed, they want you to fail; they do not want to live, they want you to die; they desire nothing, they hate existence ...” (*Atlas Shrugged.*)

What endows such a creature with a quality of abysmal evil is the fact that it has an awareness of values and is able to recognize them in people. If it were merely amoral, it would be indifferent; it would be unable to distinguish virtues from flaws. But it does distinguish them — and the essential characteristic of its corruption is the fact that its mind’s recognition of a value is transmitted to its emotional mechanism as *hatred*, not as love, desire or admiration.

Consider the full meaning of this attitude. Values are that which one acts to gain and/or keep. Values are a necessity of man’s survival, and wider: of any living organism’s survival. Life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated action, and the successful pursuit of values is a precondition of remaining alive. Since nature does not provide man with an automatic knowledge of the code of values he requires, there are differences in the codes which men accept and the goals they pursue. But consider the abstraction “value,” apart from the particular content of any given code, and ask yourself: What is the nature of a creature in which the sight of a value arouses hatred and the desire to destroy? In the most profound sense of the term, such a creature is a killer, not a physical, but a metaphysical one — it is not an enemy of *your* values, but of *all* values, it is an enemy of anything that enables men to survive, it is an enemy of life as such and of everything living.

A community of values — of some sort of values — is a necessity of any successful relationship among living beings. If you were training

an animal, you would not hurt it every time it obeyed you. If you were bringing up a child, you would not punish him whenever he acted properly. What relationship can you have with the hating creatures, and what element do they introduce into social relationships? If you struggle for existence and find that your success brings you, not approval and appreciation, but hatred, if you strive to be moral and find that your virtue brings you, not the love, but the hatred of your fellow-men, what becomes of your own benevolence? Will you be able to generate or to maintain a feeling of good will toward your fellow-men?

The greatest danger in this issue is men's inability — or worse: unwillingness — fully to identify it.

Evil as the hating creatures are, there is something still more evil: those who try to appease them.

It is understandable that men might seek to hide their vices from the eyes of people whose judgment they respect. But there are men who hide their virtues from the eyes of monsters. There are men who apologize for their own achievements, deride their own values, debase their own character — for the sake of pleasing those they know to be stupid, corrupt, malicious, evil. An obsequious pandering to the vanity of some alleged superior, such as a king, for the sake of some practical advantage, is bad enough. But pandering to the vanity of one's inferiors — inferior specifically in regard to the value involved — is so shameful an act of treason to one's values that nothing can be left thereafter of the person who commits it, neither intellectually nor morally, and nothing ever is.

If men attempt to play up to those they admire, and fake virtues they do not possess, it is futile, but understandable, if not justifiable. But to fake vices, weaknesses, flaws, disabilities? To shrink one's soul and stature? To play down- or write down, or speak down, or think down?

Observe just one social consequence of this policy: such appeasers do not hesitate to join some cause or other appealing for mercy; they never raise their voices in the name of justice.

Cowardice is so ignoble an inner state that men struggle to overcome it, in the face of real dangers. The appeaser chooses a state of cowardice where no danger exists. To live in fear is so unworthy a condition that men have died on barricades, defying the tyranny of the mighty. The appeaser chooses to live in chronic fear of the impotent. Men have died in torture chambers, on the stake, in concentration camps, in front of firing squads, rather than renounce their convictions. The appeaser renounces his under the pressure of a frown on any vacant face. Men have refused to sell their souls in exchange for fame, fortune, power, even their own lives. The appeaser does not sell his soul: he gives it away for free, getting nothing in return.

The appeaser's usual rationalization is: "I don't want to be disliked." By whom? By people he dislikes, despises and condemns.

Let me give you some examples. An intellectual who was recruiting members for Mensa — an international society allegedly restricted to intelligent men, which selects members on the dubious basis of I.Q. tests — was quoted in an interview as follows: "Intelligence is not especially admired by people. Outside Mensa you had to be very careful not to win an argument and lose a friend. Inside Mensa we can be ourselves and that is a great relief." (*The New York Times*, September 11, 1966.) A friend, therefore, is more important than the truth. What kind of friend? The kind that resents you for being right.

A professor, the head of a department in a large university, had a favorite graduate student who wanted to be a teacher. The professor had tested him as an instructor and regarded him as exceptionally intelligent. In a private conversation with the young man's parents, the professor praised him highly and declared: "There is only one

danger in his future: he is such a good teacher that the rest of the faculty will resent him.” When the young man got his Ph.D., the professor did not offer him a job, even though he had the power to do so.

The notion that an intelligent girl should hide her intelligence in order to be popular with men and find a husband, is widespread and well-known. Of what value would such a husband be to her? Blank out.

In an old movie dealing with college life, a boy asks a girl to help him get good grades by means of an actually criminal scheme (it involves the theft of a test from the professor’s office). When she refuses, the boy asks scornfully: “Are you some sort of moralist?” “Oh, no, no,” she answers hastily and *apologetically*, “it’s just my small-town upbringing, I guess.”

Do not confuse appeasement with tactfulness or generosity. Appeasement is not consideration for the feelings of others, it is *consideration for and compliance with the unjust, irrational and evil feelings of others*. It is a policy of exempting the emotions of others from moral judgment, and of willingness to sacrifice innocent, virtuous victims to the evil malice of such emotions.

Tactfulness is consideration extended only to rational feelings. A tactful man does not stress his success or happiness in the presence of those who have suffered failure, loss or unhappiness; not because he suspects them of envy, but because he realizes that the contrast can revive and sharpen their pain. He does not stress his virtues in anyone’s presence: he takes for granted that they are recognized. As a rule, a man of achievement does not flaunt his achievements, neither among equals nor inferiors nor superiors; he does not evaluate himself — or others — by a comparative standard. His attitude is not: “I am better than you,” but: “I am good.”

If, however, he encounters an envious hater who gets huffy, trying to ignore, deny or insult his achievements, he asserts them proudly. In answer to the hater's stock question: "Who do you think you are?" — he tells him.

It is the pretentious mediocrity — the show-off, the boaster, the snooty posturer — who seeks, not virtue or value, but *superiority*. A comparative standard is his only guide, which means that he has no standards and that he has a vested interest in reducing others to inferiority. Decent people, properly, resent a show-off, but the haters and enviers do not: they recognize him as a soul mate.

Offensive boasting or self-abasing appeasement is a false alternative. As in all human relationships, the guidelines of proper conduct are: objectivity and justice. But this is not what men are taught or were taught in the past.

"Use your head — but don't let anyone know it. Set your goals high — but don't admit it. Be honest — but don't uphold it. Be successful — but hide it. Be great — but act small. Be happy — but God help you if you are!" Such are the moral injunctions we gather from the cultural atmosphere in which we grow up — as men did in the past, throughout history.

The appeasement of evil — of an unknowable, undefinable, inexplicable evil — has been the undertow of mankind's cultural stream all through the ages. In primitive cultures (and even in ancient *Greece*) the appeasement took the form of the belief that the gods resent human happiness or success, because these are the prerogatives of the gods to which men must not aspire. Hence the superstitious fear of acknowledging one's good fortune — as, for instance, the ritual of parents wailing that their newborn son is puny, ugly, worthless, for fear that a demon would harm him if they admitted their happy pride in his health and looks. Observe the contradiction: Why attempt to deceive an omnipotent demon who

would be able to judge the infant's value for himself? The intention of the ritual, therefore, is not: "Don't let him know that the infant is good," but: "Don't let him know that you know it and that you're happy!"

Men create gods — and demons — in their own likeness; mystic fantasies, as a rule, are invented to explain some phenomenon for which men find no explanation. The notion of gods who are so malicious that they wish men to live in chronic misery, would not be conceived or believed unless men sensed all around them the presence of some inexplicable malevolence directed specifically at their personal happiness.

Are the haters of the good that numerous? No. The actual haters are a small, depraved minority in any age or culture. The spread and perpetuation of this evil are accomplished by those who profiteer on it.

The profiteers are men with a vested interest in mankind's psychological devastation, who burrow their way into positions of moral-intellectual leadership. They provide the haters with unlimited means of rationalization, dissimulation, excuse and camouflage, including ways of passing vices off as virtues. They slander, confuse and disarm the victims. Their vested interest is power-lust. Their stock-in-trade is any system of thought or of belief aimed at keeping men *small*.

Observe the nature of some of mankind's oldest legends.

Why were the men of Babel punished? Because they attempted to build a tower to the sky.

Why did Phaëthon perish? Because he attempted to drive the chariot of the sun.

Why was Icarus smashed? Because he attempted to fly.

Why was Arachne transformed into a spider? Because she challenged a goddess to a competition in the art of weaving — and won it.

“Do not aspire — do not venture — do not rise — ambition is self-destruction,” drones this ancient chorus through the ages — through all the ages, changing its lyrics, but not its tune — all the way to the Hollywood movies in which the boy who goes to seek a career in the big city becomes a wealthy, but miserable scoundrel, while the small-town boy who stays put wins the girl next door, who wins over the glamorous temptress.

There is and was abundant evidence to show that the curse of an overwhelming majority of men is passivity, lethargy and fear, not ambition and audacity. But men’s well-being is not the motive of that chorus.

Toward the end of World War II, newspapers reported the following: when Russian troops moved west and occupied foreign towns, the Soviet authorities automatically executed any person who had a bank account of \$100 or a high-school education; the rest of the inhabitants submitted. This is a physical dramatization of the spiritual policy of mankind’s moral-intellectual leaders: destroy the tops, the rest will give up and obey.

Just as a political dictator needs specially indoctrinated thugs to enforce his orders, so his intellectual road-pavers need them to maintain their power. Their thugs are the haters of the good; the special indoctrination is the morality of altruism.

It is obvious — historically, philosophically and psychologically — that altruism is an inexhaustible source of rationalizations for the most evil motives, the most inhuman actions, the most loathsome emotions. It is not difficult to grasp the meaning of the tenet that *the good is an object of sacrifice* — and to understand what a blanket

damnation of anything living is represented by an undefined accusation of “selfishness.”

But here is a significant phenomenon to observe: the haters and enviers — who are the most vociferous shock troops of altruism — seem to be subconsciously impervious to the altruist criterion of the good. The touchy vanity of these haters — which flares up at any suggestion of their inferiority to a man of virtue — is not aroused by any saint or hero of altruism, whose moral superiority they profess to acknowledge. Nobody envies Albert Schweitzer. Whom do they envy? The man of intelligence, of ability, of achievement, of independence.

If anyone ever believed (or tried to believe) that the motive of altruism is compassion, that its goal is the relief of human suffering and the elimination of poverty, the state of today’s culture now deprives him of any foothold on self-deception. Today, altruism is running amuck, shedding its tattered rationalizations and displaying its soul.

Altruists are no longer concerned with material wealth, not even with its “redistribution,” only with its destruction — but even this is merely a means to an end. Their savage fury is aimed at the destruction of intelligence — of ability, ambition, thought, purpose, justice; the destruction of morality, any sort of morality; the destruction of values qua values.

The last fig leaf of academic pretentiousness is the tag used to disguise this movement: *egalitarianism*. It does not disguise, but reveals.

Egalitarianism means the belief in the equality of all men. If the word “equality” is to be taken in any serious or rational sense, the crusade for this belief is dated by about a century or more: the United States of America has made it an anachronism — by establishing a

system based on the principle of individual rights. “Equality,” in a human context, is a political term: it means equality before the law, the equality of fundamental, inalienable rights which every man possesses by virtue of his birth as a human being, and which may not be infringed or abrogated by man-made institutions, such as titles of nobility or the division of men into castes established by law, with special privileges granted to some and denied to others. The rise of capitalism swept away all castes, including the institutions of aristocracy and of slavery or serfdom.

But this is not the meaning that the altruists ascribe to the word “equality.”

They turn the word into an anti-concept: they use it to mean, not *political*, but *metaphysical* equality — the equality of personal attributes and virtues, regardless of natural endowment or individual choice, performance and character. It is not man-made institutions, but nature, i.e., *reality*, that they propose to fight — by means of man-made institutions.

Since nature does not endow all men with equal beauty or equal intelligence, and the faculty of volition leads men to make different choices, the egalitarians propose to abolish the “unfairness” of nature and of volition, and to establish universal equality *in fact* — in defiance of facts. Since the Law of Identity is impervious to human manipulation, it is the Law of Causality that they struggle to abrogate. Since personal attributes or virtues cannot be “redistributed,” they seek to deprive men of their consequences — of the rewards, the benefits, the achievements created by personal attributes and virtues.

It is not equality before the law that they seek, but *inequality*: the establishment of an inverted social pyramid, with a new aristocracy on top — *the aristocracy of non-value*.

Observe the nature of the various methods used to accomplish this goal.

Since equal pay for unequal performance is too obvious an injustice, the egalitarians solve the problem by forbidding unequal performance. (See the policy of many labor unions.)

Since some men are able to rise faster than others, the egalitarians forbid the concept of “merit” and substitute the concept of “seniority” as the basis of promotions. (See the state of modern railroads.)

Since the expropriation of wealth is a somewhat discredited policy, the egalitarians place limits on the use of wealth and keep shrinking them, thus making wealth inoperative. It is “unfair,” they cry, that only the rich can obtain the best medical care — or the best education — or the best housing — or any commodity in short supply, which should be rationed, not competed for — etc., etc. (See any newspaper editorial.)

Since some women are beautiful and others are not, the egalitarians are fighting to forbid beauty contests and television commercials using glamorous models. (See Women’s Lib.)

Since some students are more intelligent and study more conscientiously than others, the egalitarians abolish the system of grades based on the objective value of a student’s scholastic achievement, and substitute for it a system of grading “on a curve” based on a *comparative* standard: a set number of grades, ranging from A’s to failures, is given to each class, regardless of the students’ individual performances, with the “distribution” of grades calculated on the relative basis of the collective performance of the class as a whole. Thus a student may get an A or an F for the same work, according to whether he happens to be in a class of morons or of child prodigies. No better way could be devised to endow a young

man with a vested interest in the inferiority of others and with fear and hatred of their superiority. (See the state of modern education.)

Observe the fact that all these methods do not provide the inferiors with any part of the virtues of their superiors, but merely frustrate and paralyze the virtues. What, then, is the common denominator and basic premise of these methods? Hatred of the good for being the good.

But most of these examples are merely the older and quieter manifestations of a premise which, once introduced into a culture, grows geometrically, pushing the haters forward and creating new haters where none had existed before. Look at today's stampede.

Pressure-group warfare is an inexorable result of a mixed economy and follows the course of its philosophical progression: it starts with economic groups and leads to an explosion of anti-intellectual, anti-ideological gang warfare. Anything and everything may serve as a rallying point for a new pressure group today, provided it is someone's *weakness*.

Weakness of any sort — intellectual, moral, financial or numerical — is today's standard of value, criterion of rights and claim to privileges. The demand for an institutionalized inequality is voiced openly and belligerently, and the right to a double standard is proclaimed self-righteously.

Since numerical superiority has a certain value, at least in practical politics, the same collectivists who once upheld the vicious doctrine of unlimited majority rule, now deny to the majority — in any given issue — the special privileges they grant to any group that claims to be a minority.

Racism is an evil and primitive form of collectivism. Today, racism is regarded as a crime if practiced by a majority — but as an inalienable right if practiced by a minority. The notion that one's

culture is superior to all others solely because it represents the traditions of one's ancestors, is regarded as chauvinism if claimed by a majority — but as “ethnic” pride if claimed by a minority. Resistance to change and progress is regarded as reactionary if demonstrated by a majority — but retrogression to a Balkan village, to an Indian tepee or to the jungle is hailed if demonstrated by a minority.

“Tolerance” and “understanding” are regarded as unilateral virtues. In relation to any given minority, we are told, it is the duty of all others, i.e., of the majority, to tolerate and understand the minority's values and customs — while the minority proclaims that its soul is beyond the outsiders' comprehension, that no common ties or bridges exist, that it does not propose to grasp one syllable of the majority's values, customs or culture, and will continue hurling racist epithets (or worse) at the majority's faces.

Nobody can pretend any longer that the goal of such policies is the elimination of racism — particularly when one observes that the real victims are the better members of these privileged minorities. The self-respecting small home owners and shop owners are the unprotected and undefended victims of every race riot. The minority's members are expected by their egalitarian leaders to remain a passive herd crying for help (which is a precondition of the power to control a pressure group). Those who ignore the threats and struggle to rise through individual effort and achievement are denounced as traitors. Traitors — to what? To a physiological (racial) collective — to the incompetence or unwillingness or lethargy or malingering of others. If the exceptional men are black, they are attacked as “Uncle Toms.” But the status of privileged minority is not confined to the blacks, it extends to all racial minorities — on one condition — and some of the most offensive herds are white.

That condition — the deeper issue involved, of greater importance to the egalitarians than mere numerical weakness — is the *primitive* nature of a given minority's traditions, i.e., its *cultural* weakness.

It is primitive cultures that we are asked to study, to appreciate and to respect — any sort of culture except our own. A piece of pottery copied from generation to generation is held up to us as an achievement — a plastic cup is not. A bearskin is an achievement — synthetic fiber is not. An oxcart is an achievement — an airplane is not. A potion of herbs and snake oil is an achievement — open-heart surgery is not. Stonehenge is an achievement — the Empire State Building is not. Black magic is an achievement — Aristotle's *Organon* is not. And if there is a more repulsive spectacle than a television broadcast presenting, as news, any two-bit group of pretentious, self-conscious adolescents, out of old vaudeville, performing some Slavonic folk dance on a street corner, in the shadow of New York's skyscrapers — I have not discovered it yet.

Why is Western civilization admonished to admire primitive cultures? Because they are *not* admirable. Why is a primitive man exhorted to ignore Western achievements? Because they *are*. Why is the self-expression of a retarded adolescent to be nurtured and acclaimed? Because he has nothing to express. Why is the self-expression of a genius to be impeded and ignored? Because he *has*.

It is to the Mohammedans, the Buddhists, and the cannibals — to the underdeveloped, the undeveloped, and the not-to-be-developed cultures — that the Capitalist United States of America is asked to apologize for her skyscrapers, her automobiles, her plumbing, and her smiling, confident, untortured, un-skinned-alive, un-eaten young men! ... It is not for her flaws that the United States of America is hated, but *for her virtues* — not for her weaknesses, but *for her achievements* — not for her failures, but *for her success* — her

magnificent, shining, life-giving success. (“The Obliteration of Capitalism,” *The Objectivist Newsletter*, October 1965.)

If there were such a thing as a passion for equality (not equality *de jure*, but *de facto*), it would be obvious to its exponents that there are only two ways to achieve it: either by raising all men to the mountaintop — or by razing the mountains. The first method is impossible because it is the faculty of volition that determines a man’s stature and actions; but the nearest approach to it was demonstrated by the United States and capitalism, which protected the freedom, the rewards and the incentives for every individual’s achievement, each to the extent of his ability and ambition, thus raising the intellectual, moral and economic state of the whole society. The second method is impossible because, if mankind were leveled down to the common denominator of its least competent members, it would not be able to survive (and its best would not choose to survive on such terms). Yet it is the second method that the altruist-egalitarians are pursuing. The greater the evidence of their policy’s consequences, i.e., the greater the spread of misery, of injustice, of vicious inequality throughout the world, the more frantic their pursuit — which is one demonstration of the fact that there is no such thing as a benevolent passion for equality and that the claim to it is only a rationalization to cover a passionate hatred of the good for being the good.

To understand the meaning and motives of egalitarianism, project it into the field of medicine. Suppose a doctor is called to help a man with a broken leg and, instead of setting it, proceeds to break the legs of ten other men, explaining that this would make the patient feel better; when all these men become crippled for life, the doctor advocates the passage of a law compelling everyone to walk on crutches — in order to make the cripples feel better and equalize the “unfairness” of nature.

If this is unspeakable, how does it acquire an aura of morality — or even the benefit of a moral doubt — when practiced in regard to man's mind? Yet this kind of motivation — hatred of the healthy for being healthy, i.e., of the good for being the good — is the ruling spirit of today's culture.

Observe some random symptoms cracking open all around us, like the skin lesions of a hidden disease.

Egalitarian educators defeated a plan to establish a Montessori day-care center for disadvantaged children, because they “feared that the Montessori-trained disadvantaged children would enter public kindergarten or the first grade with an advantage over the other children.” What was these educators' motive: the desire to lift the children of the poor — or to bring everyone down?

A noted economist proposed the establishment of *a tax on personal ability*, suggesting that “a modest first step might be a special tax on persons with high academic scores.” What would this do to the talented, purposeful young people who are barely able to make a living while working their way through school? Would they be able to pay a tax for the privilege of using their intelligence? Who — rich or poor — would want to use his intelligence in such conditions? Is it love that would condemn the best of men to a lifetime of hiding their intelligence as a guilty secret?

Was compassion the motive of the noted social worker who, years ago, wrote about her visit to Soviet Russia: “It was wonderful to see that everybody in the streets was equally shabby”? Is compassion the motive of those who denounce the United States for the existence of slums in cities — yet keep silent about or sympathize with the Soviet system, which has turned an entire country into a gigantic slum, with the exception of a small elite of rulers on top, and a vast, bloody sewer of forced labor camps below?

Ask yourself what were the motives in the following example. A professor asked his class which of two projected systems they would prefer: a system of unequal salaries — or a system paying everyone the same salary, but which would be lower than the lowest one paid under the unequal system. With the exception of one student, the entire class voted for the system of equal salaries (which was also the professor's preference).

In politics, observe the sanctimonious smugness of any ward heeler who recites the ritualistic formula about defending the interests of “the poor, the black and the young.” Why these? Because they are (presumably) weak. Who are the other kinds of citizens and what about their interests? Blank out. The implication he conveys is not that the opposite kinds are “the rich, the white and the old” (the “hard-hats” are not rich, the “Uncle Toms” are black, and the old are the heroes of Medicare). The implication is that there is only one kind of opposite, regardless of age, sex, creed, color or economic status: *the competent*.

At the turn of the century, when the notions of socialism were gaining adherents, it was believed that the competent should be enslaved in order to raise the rest of mankind to their level and equalize material benefits. Even though such a belief is evil, its adherents were better than today's egalitarians — as a man who kills for the sake of robbery is better than a man who kills for kicks. Today, socialism's record has demonstrated the impracticality of enslaving man's mind — and has brought deeply buried motives out into the open. Today's advocates of “equality” do not pretend that they wish to improve the lot of the poor; they do not wish to exploit the competent, but to destroy them.

If anyone doubted the possibility of such motives, the ecological crusade should remove all doubts.

When men's greatest benefactor, technology, is denounced as an enemy of mankind — when the U.S. is damned, not for the alleged exploitation of the masses, but explicitly for their material prosperity — when the villain is no longer the Wall Street tycoon, but the American worker — when his crime is held to be his pay-check, and his greed consists in owning a television set — when the current pejorative is not “the rich,” but “the middle class” (which means the best, the most competent, the most ambitious, the most productive group in any society, the group of self-made men) — when the plight of the poor is held to be, not poverty, but *relative* poverty (i.e., envy) — when the great emancipator, the automobile, is attacked as a public menace, and highways are decried as a violation of the wilderness — when bleary-eyed, limp-limbed young hobos of both sexes chant about the evil of labor-saving devices, and demand that human life be devoted to the grubby hand-planting of truck gardens, and to garbage disposal — when alleged scientists stretch, fake or suppress scientific evidence in order to panic the ignorant about the interplanetary perils augured by some such omen as the presence of mercury in tuna fish — when their leading philosopher proclaims that work is an outdated prejudice, that fornication should replace ambition, and that mankind's standard of living should be *brought down* — when sundry hordes block the construction of electric generators and are about to plunge New York City into the catastrophe of an overloaded power system's failure — it is time to grasp that we are not dealing with man-lovers, but with killers.

A cultural movement often produces caricatures of itself that emphasize its essence. The hippies are one such caricature. These ecological crusaders — who would pollute any stream by stepping into it — are the physical embodiments of the spirit of today's culture. Much more can be said about their motives, but for the moment observe the intention of the physical appearance they choose to assume. The purpose of flaunting deliberate ugliness and bodily

dirt is to offend others (while simultaneously playing for pity) — to defy, to affront, to bait those who hold values, any values.

But the hippies were not enough. They were surpassed by the caricature to end all caricatures: Women's Lib.

Just as the egalitarians ride on the historical prestige of those who fought for political equality, and struggle to achieve the opposite — so their special sorority, Women's Lib, rides on the historical prestige of women who fought for individual rights against government power, and struggles to get special privileges by means of government power.

Screaming that it is out to fight prejudice against women, this movement is providing evidence on a grand public scale — on any street corner and television screen — to support the worst prejudices of the bitterest misogynist.

As a group, American women are the most privileged females on earth: they control the wealth of the United States — through inheritance from fathers and husbands who work themselves into an early grave, struggling to provide every comfort and luxury for the bridge-playing, cocktail-party-chasing cohorts, who give them very little in return. Women's Lib proclaims that they should give still less, and exhorts its members to refuse to cook their husbands' meals — with its placards commanding: "Starve a rat today!" (Where would the cat's food come from, after the rat is starved? Blank out.)

The notion that a woman's place is in the home — the *Kinder-Küche-Kirche* axis — is an ancient, primitive evil, supported and perpetuated by women as much as, or more than, by men. The aggressive, embittered, self-righteous and envious housewife is the greatest enemy of the career woman. Women's Lib pounces upon this aggressiveness, bitterness, self-righteousness, envy — and directs it toward men. (It gives the lie, however, to one masculine prejudice:

women are thought to be catty, but no cat and very few men could experience the degree of malicious hostility that these women are now displaying.)

There is no place on earth where so many opportunities are open to career women as in the United States, or where so many women have achieved successful careers. Women's Lib proclaims that success should not have to be achieved, but should be guaranteed as a right. Women, it claims, should be pushed by law into any job, club, saloon or executive position they choose — and let the employer prove in court that he failed to promote a woman because she is a slob and not because she is a woman.

There *are* men who fear and resent intelligent, ambitious women. Women's Lib proposes to eliminate such feelings by asserting that intelligence and ability do not matter, only gender does.

Some men believe that women are irrational, illogical, incompetent, emotion-driven and unreliable. Women's Lib sets out to disprove it by the spectacle of sloppy, bedraggled, unfocused females stomping down the streets and chanting brief slogans, over and over again, with the stuporous monotony of a jungle ritual and the sulkiness of a badly spoiled child.

Denouncing masculine oppression, Women's Lib screams protests against the policy of regarding women as "sex objects" — through speakers who, too obviously, are in no such danger.

Proclaiming women's independence from and equality with men, Women's Lib demands liberation from the consequences of whatever sex life a woman might choose, such consequences to be borne by others: it demands free abortions and free day-nurseries. To be paid for — by whom? By men.

The sex views professed by Women's Lib are so hideous that they cannot be discussed — at least, not by me. To regard man as an

enemy — to regard woman as a combination matriarch and stevedore — to surpass the futile sordidness of a class war by instituting a sex war — to drag sex into politics and around the floor of smoke-filled back rooms, as a tool of the pressure-group jockeying for power — to proclaim spiritual sisterhood with lesbians, and to swear eternal hostility to men — is so repulsive a set of premises from so loathsome a sense of life that an accurate commentary would require the kind of language I do not like to see in print.

(I regard myself as surpassed by Women's Lib in one respect: I did not know that it was possible to blow up the character of Comrade Sonia to such gigantic proportions.)

Is there something worse than the women of the Lib movement? Yes. The men who support it. The fact that there are such men is a clue to that grotesque phenomenon.

Every other pressure group has some semi-plausible complaint or pretense at a complaint, as an excuse for existing. Women's Lib has none. But it has a common denominator with the others, the indispensable element of a modern pressure group: a claim based on weakness. It is because men are metaphysically the dominant sex and are regarded (though for the wrong reasons) as the stronger that a thing such as Women's Lib could gain plausibility and sympathy among today's intellectuals. It represents a rebellion against masculine strength, against strength as such, by those who neither attempt nor intend to develop it — and thus it is the clearest giveaway of what all the other rebellions are after.

To the credit of the majority of American women, the Lib movement did not go over too well. But neither did the college activists nor the hippies nor the nature-lovers. Yet these are the loudest voices we hear in public and these are the snarling figures we see on television screens, displaying their sores and brandishing their fists. These are the commandos of the haters' army, who crawl out of the sewer of

centuries and shake themselves in public, splattering muck over the passers-by, over the streets, the plate-glass windows and the clean white sheets of newspapers, where the drippings are scrambled into a long, steady whine that strives to induce guilt and to receive “compassion” in return.

The passers-by are the rest of us, who have to live, breathe and work in this atmosphere.

No, the majority of people are not haters of the good. The majority are disgusted by all those pathological manifestations. But a chronic experience of disgust in looking at the state of one's society is not conducive to respect, mutual confidence or good will among men. A chronic spectacle of grotesque posturing, unintelligible proclamations, incomprehensible demands, inexplicable contradictions, sordid ugliness, unopposed brutality, cynical injustice — the spectacle of aggressive malice being answered by maudlin, sentimental appeasement — will erode the morale and the morality of all but the most exceptional men.

The process of erosion starts with bewilderment and goes on to discouragement, to frustration, to bitterness, to fear, inwardly to withdrawal into a fog of subjectivity, outwardly to mistrust of all men — then to the gradual paralysis of the quest for values, to hopelessness, and to a blind hatred of everything and everyone, resembling the behavior of the actual haters who manipulated it all.

The manipulators are the intellectuals, i.e., those who disseminate ideas and whose professional work lies in the field of the humanities. The majority of people, guided by nothing but common sense and naive, unidentified feelings, are still groping blindly for the guidance of reason. They do not know that their guides, the intellectuals, have long since abandoned reason in favor of feelings which they, the victims, can neither grasp nor believe. The clearest example of the

psychological abyss between the people and the intellectuals was their respective reactions to Apollo 11.

The intellectuals themselves are part-victims, part-killers. Who, then, are the killers? The small — frighteningly small — minority who, by the grace of default, have monopolized the field of philosophy and, by the grace of Immanuel Kant, have dedicated it to the propagation of hatred of the good for being the good.

But this type of hatred is ancient. Modern philosophy is merely its munitions-maker and rationalizer, not its cause. What is the cause? The answer lies in the nature of man's consciousness.

Man cannot deal with reality on the merely perceptual level of awareness; his survival requires a conceptual method of mental functioning — but the conceptual level of awareness is *volitional*. Man may choose to function conceptually or not. Most men stumble through the transition from the predominantly perceptual functioning of childhood to the conceptual functioning of adulthood with various degrees of success, and settle on some precarious mixture of both methods. The hater of the good is the man who did not make this transition. He is a case of arrested psycho-epistemological development.

The hater's mental functioning remains on the level of childhood. Nothing is fully real to him except the concrete, the perceptually given, i.e., the immediate moment without past or future. He has learned to speak, but has never grasped the process of conceptualization. Concepts, to him, are merely some sort of code signals employed by other people for some inexplicable reason, signals that have no relation to reality or to himself. He treats concepts as if they were percepts, and their meaning changes with any change of circumstances. Whatever he learns or happens to retain is treated, in his mind, as if it had always been there, as if it were an item of direct awareness, with no memory of how he

acquired it — as a random store of unprocessed material that comes and goes at the mercy of chance.

This is the crucial difference between his mentality and that of a child: a normal child is intensely active in seeking knowledge. The hater stands still; he does not seek knowledge — he “exposes himself” to “experience,” hoping, in effect, that it will push something into his mind; if nothing happens, he feels with self-righteous rancor that there is nothing he can do about it. Mental action, i.e., mental *effort* — any sort of processing, identifying, organizing, integrating, critical evaluation or control of his mental content — is an alien realm which he spends his twisted lifetime struggling to escape. His is as stagnant a mentality as a human being can sustain on the edge of the borderline separating passivity from psychosis.

A mind that seeks to escape effort and to function automatically, is left at the mercy of the inner phenomenon over which it has no direct control: emotions. Psycho-epistemologically (any conscious assertions to the contrary notwithstanding), a hater regards his emotions as irreducible and irresistible, as a power he cannot question or disobey. But emotions come from automatized value-judgments, which come from abstract, metaphysical premises. The hater has no lasting value-judgments, only the random urges of a given moment. His emotions, therefore, are not great passions to which he sacrifices his intellect, they are not overpowering demons, but smutty little imps, transient, superficial and incredibly banal. He is moved, not by desires, but by *whims*.

How does a human being descend to such a state? There are different psychological reasons, but — in pattern — the process of self-stultification is initiated by the child who lies too often and gets away with it. In his early, formative years, when he needs to learn the mental processes required to grasp the great unknown surrounding

him, reality, he learns the opposite. He learns, in effect, that he can get whatever he wants not by observing facts, but by inventing them and by cheating, begging, threatening (throwing tantrums), i.e., by *manipulating* the adults. He concludes implicitly that reality is his enemy, since he has to fake it — to lie — in order to obtain what he wants, that the truth would defeat him and that he'd better not be concerned with it. Reality does not obey him, it frustrates his wishes, it is impervious to his feelings, it does not respond to him as the adults do; but, he feels, it is a negligible enemy, since he has the power to defeat it by means of nothing but his own *imagination*, which commands the mysteriously omnipotent adults who can do what he is unable to do: circumvent reality somehow and satisfy his whims.

Gradually, these subconscious conclusions are automatized in his mind, in the form of a habitual, ambivalent feeling: a sneaky sense of triumph — and a sense of inferiority, since he is helpless when left on his own. He counteracts it by telling himself that he is superior, since he can deceive anyone; and, seeking reassurance, he multiplies the practice of deception. Wordlessly, as an implicit premise, he acquires the belief that his means of survival is his ability to manipulate others. At a certain stage of his development, he acquires the only authentic and permanent emotion he will ever be able to experience: fear.

As he grows up, the fear grows proportionately. He becomes aware of his impotence in the face of a reality as unknown to him as it was in his childhood, only now it is a dark, menacing, demanding unknown that confronts him with problems he cannot handle (but others, somehow, can). He is able to grasp the given, the immediately present, but that is not enough: he is unable to integrate it to anything. He is trapped between two gaping black holes he has never learned to consider: yesterday and tomorrow. He has no way of knowing what (deserved) dangers will spring at him suddenly from

behind or are lying in wait for him ahead (he senses only that they *are* deserved). He senses that there is something wrong with him, with his mind, some terrible defect which must be hidden from everyone, above all from himself, at any price. He is torn by the conflict of two contradictory desires which he dares not identify: the retarded child's desire to be led, protected, told what to do — and the manipulator's desire to seek reassurance by reasserting his power of command over others.

At this stage, two different roads are open to such persons. Most of them seek the safety of stagnation and vanish into some venomous obscurity where — as slatternly housewives or incompetent clerks — they contribute to the misery of anyone they deal with, curse existence, damn mankind, and chortle with glee when they hear of someone's failure or misfortune.

But those of a more ambitious and pretentious kind take a different road. A man of this type decides to brazen it out — and cashes in on his childhood scorn of conceptualization. Language, to him, is merely some arbitrary code of signals which he can manipulate without having to confront reality. It was by means of language that he used to control others — it is by means of language that he will now attempt to control them. Such, in pattern, is the birth of the intellectual who believes that ideas are tools of deception.

Psychologists have observed a phenomenon called “the idiot-savant,” a man who has the mentality of a moron, but, for some as yet undiscovered reason, is able to perform a prodigy's feats of arithmetical calculation. The hater of the good becomes a similar phenomenon: “the idiot-philosopher,” a man who is unable to grasp the relation of ideas to reality, but devotes his life to the manufacture, propagation and manipulation of ideas — as a means of sustaining his pseudo-self-esteem.

The ideas of such philosophers (and of their followers) are singularly, startlingly unrelated to reality — like a structure of playing cards made of fog, to be dissolved by the breath of a single fact. Whatever their coiling complexity and variations, these ideas have a single, immutable goal: to dig an abyss between man's mind and reality, and thus to invalidate reality's agent in human affairs, man's reason — and a single method: the playing on human weaknesses, doubts and fears, as the fledgling hater played on them in his childhood.

On the basis of his works, I offer Immanuel Kant in evidence, as the archetype of this species: a system as consistently evil as his cannot be constructed innocently.

If one wonders about the paradox presented by this type of intellectual a man who seeks a shortcut to escape mental effort, then devotes his life to excruciating mental contortions — one may observe a similar paradox on the material level of existence. It is the case of a man who believes that “only suckers work” and seeks a shortcut to wealth by becoming a bank robber, then spends his life in and out of jails, devoting his brief snatches of freedom to the excruciating work of devising ingenious schemes for his next bank robbery.

The explanation lies in the fact that the mental contexts required to produce wealth or to stage a robbery are different, and so are the mental processes involved. The production of wealth requires the personal responsibility of dealing with reality; robbery requires only the outwitting of a few guards or policemen. The formulation of philosophical ideas requires the personal responsibility of observing, judging and integrating the facts of reality on an enormous scale; the faking of ideas requires only the outwitting of careless, frightened or ignorant men. Both the bank robber and the “idiot-philosopher” are psychological parasites. The basic cause in both cases is the same: a

mental development arrested by a concrete-bound quest for the unearned. The basic motivation is the same: an overwhelming terror of reality and the desire to escape it.

Man's need of self-esteem is the hater's nemesis. Self-esteem is reliance on one's power to think. It cannot be replaced by one's power to deceive. The self-confidence of a scientist and the self-confidence of a con man are not interchangeable states, and do not come from the same psychological universe. The success of a man who deals with reality augments his self-confidence. The success of a con man augments his panic.

The intellectual con man has only one defense against panic: the momentary relief he finds by succeeding at further and further frauds. To preserve his illusion of superiority becomes his overriding obsession. Superiority — in what? He does not know. He does not function conceptually. He judges people, events and actions “instinctively,” i.e., not by what they *are*, but by what they make him *feel*. Putting something over on people makes him feel superior — he has long since forgotten (and has never fully known) why.

He has developed a special kind of “instinct” for appraising people: he can “smell” the presence of weaknesses in people, of pretentiousness, uncertainty, self-doubt and fear — particularly fear (not fear of him, but of their common enemy: reality). Such people make him feel like “a big shot,” and his act is successful among them. But when he meets the better type of man, he goes to pieces: what he feels is terror. It is by means of his own terror that he recognizes authentic self-confidence.

The man of authentic self-confidence is the man who relies on the judgment of his own mind. Such a man is not malleable; he may be mistaken, he may be fooled in a given instance, but he is inflexible in regard to the absolutism of reality, i.e., in seeking and demanding truth. The manipulator feels impotent and in mortal danger; his terror

of the man is not personal, but metaphysical: he feels stripped of his means of survival.

There is only one source of authentic self-confidence: reason. Hence the intellectual con man's impassioned hatred of reason and of all its manifestations and consequences: of intelligence, of certainty, of ambition, of success, of achievement, of virtue, of happiness, of pride. All these are phenomena from a universe that would destroy him. Like a creature from the ooze at the bottom of the ocean, he senses a breath of air, which he cannot breathe.

Such is the cause and such is the pattern of development whose end product is hatred of the good for being the good.

At this final stage, moved by nothing but his feelings, the hater cannot tell what makes him act, he is aware only of the hatred and of an overwhelming compulsion to destroy. He does not know what long-since-forgotten whims he is paying for now, he does not know what goal he is trying to achieve — he has no goals, no desires, no whims any longer, his quest for pleasure has petered out — he has nothing to gain or to seek, his hatred is aimless and wholly nonvenal, all he knows is that he must destroy — destroy the bright, the sparkling, the smiling, the clean, destroy “the light bulb look” on a child's face — destroy, in order to preserve in the universe the *possibility* that some *potential* whim will succeed, even when he has no whim in sight and none to pursue any longer.

To explain the nature of his feeling, he snatches rationalizations at random, as he had snatched them all his life. “This man,” he cries, “is arrogant and selfish! ... He defies the gods or the will of God! ... He is intransigent, intractable, inflexible! ... He defies the will of the people! He endangers the common good! He is a threat to his fellow-men, whom he robs, despoils and exploits! ... He is cold, unfeeling, unloving! ... He is immoral: he does not forgive! ... He has invented morality to make us feel guilty! ... He is the cause of all the misery

on earth! ... We are poor, because he's rich ... we are weak, because he's strong ... we suffer, because he's happy ... We couldn't help it, couldn't help it, couldn't help it! No one can blame us, all men are equal! Who does he think he is?" The frenzy deflects the knowledge of the answer: he is a *man*.

The desire to escape that answer is the motive that attracts so many haters to the intellectual professions today — as they were attracted to philosophy or to its primitive precursor, religion, through all the ages. There have always been men of arrested mental development who, dreading reality, found psychological protection in the art of incapacitating the minds of others.

It takes many years for a man (and many, many centuries for mankind) to grasp the fact that, in order to live, man needs a comprehensive view of existence, which he relies on, consciously or not. But the formulation of such a view is the most difficult of human endeavors — and (with a few exceptions, to whom mankind owes its lives) rats rushed in where lions feared to tread. While other men were busy struggling to live, the haters were busy undercutting their means of survival — in the primitive jungle, in ancient Greece or in the United States of America.

Today, while America's best minds go into the physical professions — where reality is harder (but not impossible) to fake — the realm of philosophy, abandoned like a vacant lot, has become overgrown with Kantian weeds and overrun with Kantian squatters. Weeds, if unchecked, will grow faster than other plants and will consume the nourishment of flowers, of trees, of orchards, of farms, then will sprout through the cracks of the cement at the foundation of impregnable skyscrapers which is the spectacle we are seeing today.

The haters are in control of our culture and in the open. They have dropped the pretense of such covers as God, The People, The Future or even Love. They proclaim pure hatred of the good — of man, of

reason, of values, of existence — in classrooms, in drawing rooms, in public halls, in theaters, in books, in paintings, in the streets, by land, by sea, by air and through the gutter.

Their G.H.Q. is in the field of education, which they control. “Progressive” schools are manufacturing haters wholesale. The hordes they have produced are roaming the land, proclaiming the rule of the “Now” which is the confession of an arrested, perceptual mentality that cannot project the future, cannot hold a theory, a purpose or a value, can do nothing but hate and destroy. This is the invasion of Western civilization by psycho-epistemological barbarians. They howl and brandish the tag of “Liberation.” According to their philosophical chieftain, what they demand is *liberation from reality*. It is as simple and open as that.

What does this do to normal men? At a time when they need it most, they are left without a remnant of philosophical guidance. If they struggle to make sense out of what they see, they encounter so much irrationality, such a chaos of inexplicable evil, that they begin to believe that reality *in fact* is the nightmare constructed by the hater’s imagination. Some of them give up, some join the hordes, some take the blame for their failure to understand, some continue to struggle day by day with no thought of past or future. One cannot fight when one does not understand — and when the voices of craven appeasers keep striving to whitewash the nature of the enemy.

As long as men believe that they are facing “misguided idealists” — or “rebellious youth” — or “a counter-culture” — or “a new morality” — or the transition period of a changing world, or an irresistible historical process, or even an invincibly powerful monster — confusion undercuts their will to resist, and intellectual self-defense is impossible. It is imperative to grasp that this is not the time for temporizing, compromising and self-deception. It is

necessary fully to understand the nature of the enemy and his mentality.

There is no giant behind the devastation of the world — only a shriveled creature with the wizened face of a child who is out to blow up the kitchen because he cannot steal his cookies and eat them, too. “Take a look at [him] now, when you face your last choice — and if you choose to perish, do so with full knowledge of how cheaply how small an enemy has claimed your life.” (*Atlas Shrugged*.)

What is the weapon one needs to fight such an enemy? For once, it is one who will say that love is the answer — love in the actual meaning of the word, which is the opposite of the meaning they give it — love as a response to values, love of the good for being the good. If you hold on to the vision of any value you love — your mind, your work, your wife or husband, or your child — and remember that that is what the enemy is after, your shudder of rebellion will give you the moral fire, the courage and the *intransigence* needed in this battle. What fuel can support one’s fire? Love for man at his highest potential.

(July–August 1971)

Afterword

***The Age of Envy* Revisited**

by Marilyn Moore

Ayn Rand wrote about envy in her novels, her popular nonfiction, even in her journals and letters. It was a problem she examined from every angle. But why did the champion of individualism, achievement, and free-market capitalism concern herself with such an ugly topic?

The reason is that Rand considered envy uniquely evil—a personal failure, a social cancer, and a corrupt and cynical political ploy.

In *The Age of Envy*, Ayn Rand defined envy as “hatred of the good for being the good.” Hers is an important definition, because it gets to the core of envy’s pernicious nature.

What is Envy?

Rand recognized that the term “envy” is variously applied to different things. Envy is not to be confused, for example, with a legitimate resentment of unearned success, as when the immoral defeat the moral, or with an acknowledgment that a failure was deserved, as when the immoral lose. Rand distinguishes those responses as proper to “a sense of justice.” The recent college admissions scandal is a good example. An acknowledgment that the people involved are liars and cheats has nothing to do with envy of their wealth or status.

Nor is it envy to dislike a policy-maker who demands you sacrifice your future for the sake of the planet. If you value

yourself, then you consider self-sacrifice a vice not a virtue, and you can legitimately resent that policy-maker's demands.

She didn't even regard the desire for other people's successes, advantages, and riches as true envy. Rand even conceded that that desire could be a powerful motivator. We can envy another person's beauty, health, expertise, wealth, success, or happiness, and, if we are honest with ourselves, we can admit that we would like such an accomplishment for ourselves.

Then we can transform envy into aspiration and get to work.

Nevertheless, she held, the core meaning of envy—and its vicious essence—is “the attitude of a person who characteristically resents someone's success, happiness, achievement or good fortune—and experiences pleasure at someone's failure, unhappiness or misfortune.”

Envy is therefore a combination of covetousness, nihilism, and schadenfreude.

Envy is a moral failing that has a cascading series of bad effects. In the beginning, it is the envier who is diminished. He observes others who are accomplished, but rather than letting the accomplishment inspire him to achieve for himself, he refuses to act. He fails to accept the challenges of survival—using his reason to identify his purpose in life, to get an education, to find a job, to develop expertise in order to advance, and to safeguard his health and his finances. Such an individual in effect chooses not to live.

But the failure of envy does not stop with the envier. Because envy is the hatred of the good for being good, the envier goes on the attack. He turns what could have been love for

accomplishment into a hatred of the accomplished. They must be chopped down to size. He tells himself that it is not his fault for failing to achieve, it is the fault of the accomplished for embarrassing him. They are disrespecting him. No one should be doing so well.

Envy and Social Justice

Rand published “The Age of Envy” in two parts in her monthly periodical, *The Objectivist*, in July and August 1971. According to David Kelley, Ph.D., ‘The Age of Envy’ is still the best guide to the victims' lobby that has since emerged.”

Envy was becoming a core component of identity politics, Rand noticed. Special interest groups were no longer focused on achievement and advancement. They were focused instead on eliminating what they considered unfair advantages. In the name of equity, the needy, the poor, and the apathetic no longer needed to rise. The able, the wealthy, and the successful had to fall.

High achievers were being targeted as privileged and disrespectful. Their achievements were being labelled acts of oppression. Social justice became the rallying cry of special interests.

Rand opposed the egalitarian values and methods of identity politics, but she was not indifferent to real problems minorities faced. Rand adamantly denounced all forms of racism, which she derided as a “barnyard sort of collectivism,” and defended women whether they chose to pursue a career or raise a family.

As individualists and libertarians, we cannot ignore the problem of prejudice either.

David Kelley [has](#) argued for years that, “We let the Left take the fight against prejudice away from us.” As a result, we often come off as indifferent to the struggles against prejudice:

As individualists and advocates of reason, we ought to be the ones promoting this. We ought to be the ones saying, "Judge people by who they are as individuals, not by the groups they belong to. Be rational in how you apply standards of justice. Don't let prejudice and bias affect your judgment." We should be the ones saying that. But we shy away from doing so because the fight against discrimination got infected with leftist premises.

Social justice is not the solution, however. Social justice is envy paraded about under the pretext of justice, and educators and politicians are cynically using it both to embolden the troubled and cynical and to manipulate the young and innocent.

Under social justice, victimhood has become a fast track to attention and power. Victims know that when you group people into classes and pit them against each other, a mindset of exploiters and exploited develops. Resentment follows.

Jussie Smollett is one example of someone ruthlessly exploiting social justice to enact a hate-crime hoax, playing the victim apparently for no other reason than self-aggrandizement. His [victimhood](#) followed the social justice script: “Turn grief into grievance. Find someone to resent, to blame, and to pay.”

Smollett was enjoying success on a popular television show when he apparently decided to stage an attack on himself, claiming that his attackers, Chicagoans wearing MAGA hats, targeted him because he is black and gay. The facts will come out in the trial. But the social justice warriors wasted no time condemning the attack and cynically embracing every prejudice against Smollett's imaginary attackers.

In a notorious television interview, Smollett claimed to believe in justice. He even shed a tear, for which he was rewarded with an outpouring of phony social-justice love. But he and his defenders were oblivious to the real injustice he inflicted on others.

The innocent, on the other hand, buy into social justice out of a mistaken sense of justice. The idealistic and able, those who have the most to contribute, are turned against themselves. In public schools, and by Progressive and Socialist politicians, young people are urged to squander their education and abandon their own goals for social justice's sake. Over and over they agree to spurn the mindset and actions that will preserve their own survival and their own happiness under the delusion that their lives come at the expense of someone else's, and that the lives of others are more important than their own.

They are the ones who leave college and martyr themselves in filthy living conditions to block a legal natural gas pipeline. They renounce modern industrial society to squat in abandoned buildings or on city streets to protect the planet. Some young women have even declared that they won't have children, not for personal or professional reasons, but for environmental ones. They are afraid to add another carbon footprint. These

individuals sacrifice critical years when they could be gaining expertise, building careers, building wealth, finding love, getting married, starting a family.

For the troubled, the nihilistic, and the criminal, social justice is a convenient rationalization. These are the young people who join Antifa and run riot. They use terrorist tactics to stifle free speech and violate property rights.

The Zachary Greenberg incident is an example. Greenberg, who is 28 years old, was caught on video sucker punching Hayden Williams on the UC Berkeley campus. Williams, who is 26 years old, was tabling for the conservative organization Turning Point USA. Neither Greenberg nor Williams are students at Berkeley. Both were on campus for legitimate reasons—Greenberg, a software engineer, had been studying in the library.

Greenberg, who has had legal trouble in the past, flew into a social justice rage because he felt victimized by Williams's conservatism. Greenberg appears to consider himself the injured party.

In his article "Blood Brothers," Robert Bidinotto explored the psychology of such acts of social justice violence:

The collectivization of personal identity is a theme stressed by numerous researchers. In "Psychology of Terrorism," forensic psychologist Dr. Randy Borum writes, "Perceived injustice, need for identity, and need for belonging are common vulnerabilities among potential terrorists." Israeli political scientist Ehud Sprinzak says, "It appears that, as radicalization deepens, the collective group identity takes over much of the

individual identity of the members; and, at the terrorist stage, the group identity reaches its peak.”

Not surprisingly, the stages of excuse-making that lead to terrorist violence are similar to that which leads to mass murder. Borum says it “begins by framing some unsatisfying event or condition as being unjust, blaming the injustice on a target policy, person, or nation, and then vilifying, often demonizing, the responsible party to facilitate justification for aggression.” Not that different from what we know of the motives of Seung-Hui Cho [the Virginia Tech killer] and other mass murderers.

Within the confines of such a group, the perspectives of individuals become divorced from reality and independent judgment. “The actions of terrorist organizations are based on a subjective interpretation of the world rather than objective reality,” observes researcher Martha Crenshaw. Simultaneously, the member is gradually exposed to, and becomes inured to, extreme and violent acts.

Jussie Smollett now faces 16 felony charges. Zachary Greenberg has been charged with three felony counts. Both have pled not guilty.

That both men face charges is a reminder that justice still matters. Should social justice replace justice, if envy becomes tolerated in our society under social justice’s deceptive mask, we will all lose.

The events in Portland, Oregon in October 2018 are a harbinger of life under social justice. During a protest against a recent police shooting, Antifa attacked several people,

damaging their cars and other property. An elderly woman in a wheelchair who complained about noise from a group of Antifa protesters was surrounded and roughed up. The protestors rationalized their violence as “mourning,” but their actions were aimed nihilistically at destroying civil society. The Portland police refused to intervene for fear of escalation, a decision the Mayor of Portland, Ted Wheeler, endorsed in compliance to the angry mob.

Ayn Rand knew the nihilism of envy. In her novel, *Anthem*, which you should read if you haven't yet, she illustrated the horror of a stagnant and decrepit society destroyed by envy. Ambition, accomplishment, self-interest, even love are forbidden. Nothing is undertaken for fear of upsetting social equity. Life is reduced to a stark, subsistence level marked by uniformity, apathy, and need. It is not worth living.

Victim or Victor?

Fortunately, we can work against envy and victimhood. We can expose the pretence of social justice and restore the virtues of individualism, justice, and achievement. As Jennifer Grossman points out, we can start by nurturing those virtues in ourselves. In "A Prayer for Production," Grossman reminds us that each of us is responsible for respecting individual rights. We must value the first amendment rights to free speech, assembly, and conscience. We must value the rights of everyone to production and trade. We must respect property rights and the economic benefits we all receive from the rare individuals who are willing to take the risk and start a business. Their grocery stores, farms, factories, oil wells, trucking companies, airlines,

and so much more enrich us all. Their innovations lengthen our lives, ease our workload, and add variety to our leisure.

David Kelley reminds us to take the moral high ground, to remember how important life is, and that it is a waste to sacrifice it on the altar of victimhood:

Don't let the "victims" claim the moral high ground. Expose their views for what they are—the expression of envy, the rejection of individualism and personal achievement. Above all, as an individual, know that your life is yours to live. You have a mind, you have a life, and your life is what you make of it. Yes, of course, some people start with more advantages, but wherever you started in life, you have opportunities. Take advantage of them, take pride in what you achieve, and never apologize for success. Do not envy the success of others; it diminishes you. And don't let the envy of others spoil your enjoyment of what you have earned.

The best antidote for envy—for the hatred of the good for being the good—is always to love the good. Ayn Rand knew this, and she put it into words at the conclusion of "The Age of Envy." This aspect of Rand, her commitment to love, is often overlooked. Her concluding words, however, are the words of a woman deeply in love with humanity and with life's possibilities. They are worth remembering:

What is the weapon one needs to fight such an enemy? For once, it is I who will say that love is the answer—love in the actual meaning of the word, which is the opposite of the meaning they give it—love as a response to values, love of the good for being the good. If you hold on to the vision of any

value you love—your mind, your work, your wife or husband, or your child—and remember that that is what the enemy is after, your shudder of rebellion will give you the moral fire, the courage and the intransigence needed in this battle. What fuel can support one's fire? Love for man at his highest potential.

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